

CLAIMS

1. A server for use in a system that is designed to transmit, receive and share multimedia information between a plurality of terminal devices that are connected together
5 over a network, the server comprising:

a management table for managing identifiers to identify the terminal devices and the addresses of the terminal devices on the network;

a server receiving section, which receives the
10 identifier from a first one of the terminal devices;

a processing section for getting the address of the first terminal device on the transmitting end based on reception of the identifier and also getting the address of a second one of the terminal devices, identified by the
15 identifier received, by reference to the identifier and the management table; and

a server transmitting section for sending the address of the second terminal device to the first terminal device when the first terminal device retains the multimedia information
20 and for sending the address of the first terminal device to

the second terminal device when the second terminal device retains the multimedia information,

wherein the multimedia information is transmitted, received and shared between the first and second terminal
5 devices by reference to the address provided.

2. The server of claim 1, wherein in the case where the first terminal device retains the multimedia information,

the server receiving section receives the identifier of
10 the second terminal device and a share request to share the multimedia information from the first terminal device, and the server transmitting section sends the share request to the second terminal device, and

when the server receiving section receives an
15 acknowledgement, indicating that the multimedia information is receivable, from the second terminal device in response to the share request, the server transmitting section sends the address of the second terminal device and a request to transmit the multimedia information to the first terminal
20 device.

3. The server of claim 2, wherein the first terminal device has a transmitting-end database on which the multimedia information, including at least one title, and title
5 information, representing the properties of the at least one title, are stored, and

wherein the server receiving section receives the title information, stored in the transmitting-end database, from the first terminal device, and

10 wherein the processing section makes a title list, including predetermined titles, based on the title information and the identifier of the second terminal device, and

wherein the server transmitting section transmits the title list to the first terminal device and receives a request
15 to share the multimedia information, selected by reference to the title list, from the first terminal device.

4. The server of claim 3, wherein the processing section makes a tilt list including titles that are playable by the
20 second terminal device.

5. The server of claim 1, wherein in the case where the first terminal device retains the multimedia information,

the server further includes a format description table
5 that describes correspondence between the identifiers to identify the terminal devices and the formats of the multimedia information that are compatible with the respective devices,

the processing section generates filter information about
10 the format compatible with the second terminal device by reference to the format description table, and the server transmitting section transmits the filter information to the first terminal device, and

a request to share the multimedia information that has
15 been filtered by the first terminal device in accordance with the filter information is sent from the first terminal device to the second terminal device, whereby the multimedia information is transmitted, received and shared between the first and second terminal devices.

6. The server of claim 1, wherein in the case where the second terminal device retains the multimedia information,

the server receiving section receives the identifier of the second terminal device and a share request to share the multimedia information from the first terminal device, and the server transmitting section sends the share request and the address of the first terminal device to the second terminal device, and

when the server receiving section receives an acknowledgement, indicating that the multimedia information is transmittable, from the second terminal device in response to the share request, the server transmitting section sends a request to receive the multimedia information to the first terminal device.

15

7. The server of claim 6, wherein the second terminal device has a transmitting-end database on which the multimedia information, including at least one title, and title information, representing the properties of the at least one title, are stored, and

wherein the server receiving section receives the title information, stored in the transmitting-end database, from the second terminal device, and

wherein the processing section makes a title list,
5 including predetermined titles, based on the title information and the identifier of the first terminal device, and

wherein the server transmitting section transmits the title list to the first terminal device and receives a request to share the multimedia information, selected by reference to
10 the title list, from the first terminal device.

8. The server of claim 7, wherein the processing section makes a tilt list including titles that are playable by the first terminal device.

15

9. The server of claim 1, wherein the address includes an IP address and a port number.

10. The server of claim 3, further comprising a search
20 section for searching the title information that is stored in

the transmitting-end database,

wherein the server receiving section receives the title information based on a result of the search done by the search section.

5

11. A method for processing a server for use in a system that is designed to transmit, receive and share multimedia information between a plurality of terminal devices that are connected together over a network, the server including a management table for managing identifiers to identify the terminal devices and the addresses of the terminal devices on the network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving the identifier from a first one of the terminal devices;

15 getting the address of the first terminal device on the transmitting end based on reception of the identifier and also getting the address of a second one of the terminal devices, identified by the identifier received, by reference to the identifier and the management table; and

20 sending the address of the second terminal device to the

first terminal device when the first terminal device retains the multimedia information and sending the address of the first terminal device to the second terminal device when the second terminal device retains the multimedia information,

5 whereby the multimedia information is transmitted, received and shared between the first and second terminal devices by reference to the address provided.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein in the case where
10 the first terminal device retains the multimedia information,

the step of receiving includes receiving the identifier of the second terminal device and a share request to share the multimedia information from the first terminal device,

the step of sending includes sending the share request to
15 the second terminal device, and

when an acknowledgement, indicating that the multimedia information is receivable, is received from the second terminal device in response to the share request, the step of sending includes sending the address of the second terminal
20 device and a request to transmit the multimedia information

to the first terminal device.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the first terminal
device has a transmitting-end database on which the multimedia
5 information, including at least one title, and title
information, representing the properties of the at least one
title, are stored, and

wherein the step of receiving includes receiving the
title information, stored in the transmitting-end database,
10 from the first terminal device, and

wherein the step of processing includes making a title
list, including predetermined titles, based on the title
information and the identifier of the second terminal device,
and

15 wherein when in the step of sending, the title list is
sent to the first terminal device after that,

the step of receiving includes receiving a request to
share the multimedia information, selected by reference to the
title list, from the first terminal device.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of processing includes making a tilt list including titles that are playable by the second terminal device.

5 15. The method of claim 11, wherein in the case where the first terminal device retains the multimedia information, the server further includes a format description table that describes correspondence between the identifiers to identify the terminal devices and the formats of the
10 multimedia information that are compatible with the respective devices,

the step of processing includes generating filter information about the format compatible with the second terminal device by reference to the format description table,
15 and

the step of sending includes transmitting the filter information to the first terminal device,

whereby a request to share the multimedia information that has been filtered by the first terminal device in
20 accordance with the filter information is sent from the first

terminal device to the second terminal device, and the multimedia information is transmitted, received and shared between the first and second terminal devices.

5 16. The method of claim 11, wherein in the case where the second terminal device retains the multimedia information,

the step of receiving includes receiving the identifier of the second terminal device and a share request to share the multimedia information from the first terminal device,

10 the step of sending includes sending the share request and the address of the first terminal device to the second terminal device, and

when an acknowledgement, indicating that the multimedia information is transmittable, is received from the second terminal device in response to the share request, the step of sending includes sending a request to receive the multimedia information to the first terminal device.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the second terminal device has a transmitting-end database on which the multimedia

information, including at least one title, and title
information, representing the properties of the at least one
title, are stored, and

wherein the step of receiving includes receiving the
5 title information, stored in the transmitting-end database,
from the second terminal device, and

wherein the step of processing includes making a title
list, including predetermined titles, based on the title
information and the identifier of the first terminal device,
10 and

wherein when in the step of sending, the title list is
sent to the first terminal device after that,

the step of receiving includes receiving a request to
share the multimedia information, selected by reference to the
15 title list, from the first terminal device.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of
processing includes making a tilt list including titles that
are playable by the first terminal device.

19. The method of claim 11, wherein the address includes an IP address and a port number.

20. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step
5 of searching the title information that is stored in the transmitting-end database,

wherein the step of receiving includes receiving the title information based on a result of the step of searching.